

## Sample Text for Incorporating Endangered Resources Information into Community Planning Documents

---

The following is sample text that illustrates how endangered resources information can be used within community or comprehensive plans. Please note that text in blue is specific to the community and should be changed based on the individual community and its environment. Black text is standard text that can be cut and paste for any document where the information would be useful.

### 3.2.6 *Wildlife Resources*

#### 3.2.6.1 **The Importance of Biodiversity**

Biodiversity is the full spectrum of life forms and the many ecological processes that support them. Protecting the biodiversity is essential to core values such as maintaining clean air and water, providing adequate habitat for the state's flora and fauna, maintaining a vibrant economy and providing recreational opportunities. Protecting Biodiversity depends on the sustainability of diverse ecosystems, such as the mosaic of forests, agricultural lands, grasslands, bluffs, coastal zones and aquatic communities present in Wisconsin. It also depends upon the conservation of each ecosystem's basic components – the natural communities, plants and animals within them. Ecosystems contain a variety of species that are unique in some way and provide value to the diversity of the individual ecosystem and the state overall. It is important to view biodiversity at all levels to ensure the adequate conservation of Wisconsin's environment.

At the broadest scale, the State of Wisconsin is divided into distinct "ecological landscapes" based on unique combinations of physical and biological characteristics that make up the ecosystems, such as climate, geology, soils, water, or vegetation. They differ in levels of biological productivity, habitat suitability for wildlife, presence of rare species and natural communities, and in many other ways that affect land use and management. *The City of Monroe is located at the interface of two ecological landscapes: the Southeast Glacial Plain landscape to the north and east and the Southwest Savanna landscape to the south and west. See map XX and Appendix XX for descriptions*, or go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/landscapes/> for detailed descriptions and management opportunities for each ecological landscape.

#### 3.2.6.2 **Natural Communities**

Ecological landscapes are comprised of natural communities – the assemblages of plants and animals at specific locations. Because of the biotic and abiotic differences between ecological landscapes, the natural communities within each are typically different as well. *The Southeast Glacial Plain was originally composed of a mix of prairie, oak forests and savanna, and maple-basswood forests. The deeply dissected, unglaciated Southwest Savanna landscape was composed of tall grass prairie, oak savanna and some wooded slopes of oak forest. Today, both landscapes are primarily in agricultural production with scattered woodlands, savannas and remnant prairies. Restoration opportunities for these natural communities should be considered. See Appendix E*, or go to <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/communities/descriptions.htm> for descriptions of natural community types.

#### 3.2.6.3 **Endangered Species**

Plant and animal species are considered one of the fundamental building blocks of ecological landscapes and biodiversity. The presence of one or more rare species and natural communities in an area can be an indication of an area's health and ecological importance and should prompt

attention to conservation, management and restoration needs. Protection of such species is a valuable and vital component of sustaining biodiversity.

While the conservation of plants, animals and their habitat should be considered for all species, this is particularly important for rare or declining species. An endangered species is one whose continued existence is in jeopardy and may become extinct. A threatened species is one that is likely, within the foreseeable future, to become endangered. A special concern species is one about which some problem of abundance or distribution is suspected but not yet proven. The main purpose of the special concern category is to focus attention on certain species before they become endangered or threatened. Remaining examples of Wisconsin's intact native communities are also tracked but not protected by the law. Natural communities capture much of our native biodiversity and provide benchmarks for future scientific studies.

Both the state and federal governments prepare their own separate lists of such plant and animal species but do so working in cooperation with one another, as well as with various other organizations and universities. The WDNR's Endangered Resources Program monitors endangered, threatened, and special concern species and maintains the state's Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) database. This program maintains data on the locations and status of rare species in Wisconsin and these data are exempt from the open records law due to their sensitive nature.

The Wisconsin Endangered Species Law (<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/statutes/01Stat0029.pdf>) was enacted to afford protection for certain wild animals and plants that the Legislature recognized as endangered or threatened and in need of protection as a matter of general state concern. It is illegal to 1) take, transport, possess, process or sell any wild animal that is included on the Wisconsin Endangered and Threatened Species List; 2) process or sell any wild plant that is a listed species; 3) cut, root up, sever, injure, destroy, remove, transport or carry away a listed plant on public lands or lands a person does not own, lease, or have the permission of the landowner. There are exemptions to the plant protection on public lands for forestry, agriculture and utility activities. In some cases, a person can conduct the above activities if permitted under a Department permit (i.e. "Scientific Take" Permit or an "Incidental Take" Permit).

The Federal Endangered Species Act (<http://endangered.fws.gov/esa.html>) also protects animals and plants that are considered endangered or threatened at a national level. The law prohibits the direct killing, taking, or other activities that may be detrimental to the species, including habitat modification or degradation, for all federally listed animals and designated critical habitat. Federally listed plants are also protected but only on federal lands.

Implementation of the endangered species laws is usually accomplished during the permit review process conducted by the WDNR or through a separate environmental review through the Endangered Resources (ER) Program. However, it is the responsibility of the landowner to ensure they are not violating the endangered species laws. It is recommended that communities encourage or require developers to contact the ER program early in their planning stage and request a review of the state's Natural Heritage Inventory prior of their proposed project. This will serve to protect these species and ensure the appropriate application of the state and federal endangered species laws. It is further recommended that measures suggested by the Department for non-protected species and natural communities be implemented by the project proponent.

Generalized endangered resources data is available at the WDNR Internet site <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/review/index.htm>. Site-specific evaluation of a site occurs within existing DNR permit review processes or through the environmental review process of the Endangered Resources Program. The latter two processes ensure appropriate consideration for

potential impacts to all rare species and natural communities within the Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) Database.

*According to the NHI database and listed in Figure XX, 13 elements (plants, animals or natural communities) have been recorded within a 3-mile radius of the City of Monroe. In addition, Map E7 provides a full list of all elements known to occur within Green County. Thorough inventories of the entire county have not been conducted for rare species. Additional rare species and their habitat may occur in other locations but are not recorded within the NHI database.*

**Figure XX: Existing Records for Rare Species**

Scientific Name	Common Name	State Status	Federal Status	Date Last Observed	Taxonomic Group
<i>Tyto alba</i>	Barn Owl	END		1982-12-27	BIRD
<i>Camassia scilloides</i>	Wild Hyacinth	END		1948-05-29	PLANT
<i>Echinacea pallida</i>	Pale-purple Coneflower	THR		1993-07-31	PLANT
<i>Gentiana alba</i>	Yellow Gentian	THR		1931-08-20	PLANT
<i>Microtus ochrogaster</i>	Prairie Vole	SC		1998	MAMMAL
<i>Reithrodontomys megalotis</i>	Western Harvest Mouse	SC		1998	MAMMAL
<i>Diplazium pycnocarpon</i>	Glade Fern	SC		1932-06-10	PLANT
<i>Lithospermum latifolium</i>	American Gromwell	SC		1972-05-23	PLANT
<i>Nothocalais cuspidata</i>	Prairie False-dandelion	SC		1933-05-30	PLANT
<i>Orobanche uniflora</i>	One-flowered Broomrape	SC		1960-06-07	PLANT
<i>Thaspium trifoliatum</i> var. <i>flavum</i>	Purple Meadow-parsnip	SC		1972-06-04	PLANT
<i>Trillium recurvatum</i>	Reflexed Trillium	SC		1891-05-15	PLANT
<i>Southern dry-mesic forest</i>	Southern Dry-mesic Forest	NA		1976-09	COMMUNITY

END = Endangered; THR = Threatened; SC = Special Concern; NA = Not applicable

*Given the position of City within the Southeast Glacial Plain and the Southwest Savanna landscapes, it is not surprising that the above species prefer prairie, grassland and oak woodland habitats. For example, Pale-purple coneflower and wild hyacinth are both prairie-dependant species with ranges that are limited to south and southwestern Wisconsin. Protecting or restoring prairie remnants would benefit such species.*

*Similarly, grassland habitats that include both native grasslands and agricultural areas such as hayfields, small grains, row crops, fallow fields and set-aside fields are home for the State Endangered barn owl. The WDNR has identified the Muralt/Monroe Grasslands surrounding and to the north of the City of Monroe as an area that contains significant grassland habitat (see Managing Habitat for Grassland Birds: A Guide for Wisconsin. Sample and Mossman, 1997). The same site was identified in the WDNR Land Legacy Report as a site of outstanding conservation significance (WDNR Land Legacy Report, 2004)*

#### **3.2.6.4 State Natural Areas**

State Natural Areas (SNAs) protect outstanding examples of Wisconsin's native landscape - often the last refuge for rare plants and animals. Wisconsin's 409 State Natural Areas are valuable for research and educational use, the preservation of genetic and biological diversity, and for providing benchmarks for determining the impact of use on managed lands. *There are no designated SNAs within the City of Monroe. The following SNAs are found in the surrounding landscape and provide a picture of the area's native biodiversity and future opportunities for restoration (see Appendix XX for SNA descriptions).*

- *Abraham's Woods*

- *Browntown Oak Forest*
- *Muralt Bluff Prairie*
- *Oliver Prairie*

### **3.2.6.5 Constraints/Opportunities**

It would be great to list the existing constraints to protection of wildlife and endangered species. I don't have the experience with the community, so I'm only guessing. These would need to come primarily through the public participation process. But perhaps limited open space, invasive species, limited funding for management, etc.

Then, a list of opportunities/objectives for the above issues:

- *Protect and manage for wildlife and the prairie, grassland and oak savanna habitats that exist within the 90-acre Forest Prairie Park and 18-acre Honey Creek Park per the park management plans.*
- *Continue to partner with the Wisconsin Prairie Enthusiasts and the Green Rock Audubon Society for the preservation and management of the natural areas within the parks.*
- *Encourage applicants for new development proposals to contact the WDNR Endangered Resources Program to review proposals for impacts to rare species.*
- *Manage against the spread of invasive species*
- *Partner with Wisconsin Prairie Enthusiasts and Green Rock Audubon Society to manage Forest Prairie and Honey Creek parks to reduce invasive plant species.*
- *Continue to implement the noxious weed ordinance to reduce invasive plants species.*
- *Encourage the planting of native prairie and savanna species in new development proposals (consider change to require this in the existing subdivision ordinance).*